

Thank you to our wonderful Catechists and Assistants



Dear Parish Family of Assumption,

These are our 40+ Religion Teachers for 2014, for our 600+ children in our Religious Education Program. In your name, let me thank them and praise them for giving of their time to share our Catholic Faith. Right now, our **Diocese**, led by our Bishop Frank, is going through a detailed, enthusiastic, prayerful and joyful **Synod Process**. I attended the First of Four Sessions last Saturday from 8:00am to 3:00pm with hundreds of delegates from throughout Fairfield County. One of the main topics of reflection was our **Youth** and how we form them. The bishop is receiving positive, helpful and critical feedback from parents, catechists, directors of religious education, deacons, priests and pastors on the state of religious education.

The feedback is brutally honest, respectful and encouraging. The challenges are heavy and the future bright. What makes the future bright? Well...without denying the hard work that lies ahead, our **Catechists** pictured above make Rel. Ed. at Assumption bright. The **parents**, the primary religious educators of our children, also make the future bright and of course our precious **children** from pre-school to grade 12. We all are baptized, we all have spiritual needs and I sense more and more parents are realizing... first things first... learning how to earn a living, the many wonderful sports and cultural activities Westport provides are extremely important, necessary and available... but I find parents telling me Father Tom, "**the spiritual needs of my children are more important!**"

It is not a matter of either/or... but both/and.... Cathy Romano and her two assistants, Nhur and Dolly, work hard with our Catechists and Aides to share information and our experience of being human, being both a believer and believer. "Believing is NOT enough". One dad told me recently...believing without belonging is impossible... community is paramount. In Soccer, we are a TEAM, on stage, the cast is a TEAM, on the football and baseball fields we are a TEAM, in school, the Principal, Parents, Teachers and Students form a TEAM...and at Assumption, we belong to a TEAM. You can't just believe and not belong...it is too painful and actually absurd to think you can profess faith and NOT practice it with a TEAM.

Attendance at Mass on Christmas, Easter, Funerals and Weddings will not get us through life anymore than showing up for the Game, or Theatre Event without attending practice or rehearsals will secure a place for us in the game or production on stage. The days of getting by on cheap grace are over in "Christian America"...it is now counter cultural to be a Christian in the U.S. and we must admit it, accept it and religiously educate our children lest they end up in the fastest growing group of people in the U.S... non practicing Catholics. We don't sacramentalize our children and then abandon their formation. That is why I am hopeful. I sense in our parish family more and more over my 15 years with you and our dedicated Catechists, Aides, Parents, the Children, Young Adults in High School, you are getting it! That our Catholic Christian religion is about life, learning how to live right, service and belonging. Thank you all and please everyone, keep up the good work which God will one day bring to completion.

Happy 2014-15 School year,

Fr. Tom
Pastor